(b) whether State Government like Gujarat are closing down Leather Development Corporations and Handloom Corporations; and

(c) whether Government would consider revival of these corporations which are helpful for the rural population, scheduled castes in particular?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) The details of funds allocated to the various Corporations are as under:

Sl. No.	Name of the Corporation	Funds allocated during 2001-02 (Rs. in crores)
1.	National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation	25.00
2.	National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation	25.00
3.	National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation	27.00
4.	National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation	16.84

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The Government of Gujarat has not closed down the State Leather Development Corporation but the same has been merged with the Gujarat Rural Industries Marketing Corporation Ltd., with effect from 1.3.2001. The State Government of Gujarat has also decided to merge the State Handloom Development Corporation and the State Handicraft Development Corporation. The merger of these corporations will take care of the scheduled caste beneficiaries.

Target and achievement of shipping industry

577. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian shipping industry has failed to achieve the target fixed the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the target and the achievement for the Plan period;

(c) the reasons for the wide gap between the target and the achievement; and

(d) the steps being taken to achieve target during the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI VED PRAKASH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has fixed a target of 9 million Groos Ton (GT) to be achieved by the end of the 9th Plan period. Against this, the tonnage position at the end of the 9th Plan period was 6.82 million GT comprising of 560 vessels.

(c) Lack of conductive fiscal environment was the main reason for Indian Shipping Industry not achieving the targeted tonnage. Further, the Shipping Industry faced world wide recession during the first half of the Ninth Plan period.

(d) The Government has been taking steps from time to time to facilitate the growth of Indian tonnage. Considering the slow growth of Indian tonnage, the following fiscal measures have also been taken by the Government from the year 2000-2001.

(i) Restoration of Section 33AC of the Income Tax Act from 50% to 100% tax relief on amounts earmarked for vessel acquisition in separate reserve account;

(ii) Increase in depreciation rate from 20% to 25%;

(iii) Necessary amendments in EXIM policy to rectify the anomaly of categorizing acquisition of second hand vessels as capital goods, which necessitated procuring the special import license for the purpose;

(iv) Allowing 100% foreign direct investment in the field of shipping;

(v) Ministry of Shipping convinced Ministry of Finance to roll-back imposition of 5% customs duty on acquisition of ocean going ships from abroad;

(vi) Expanding the scope of Section 33AC to stimulate Indian Ship-owners to earmark higher funds for acquisition of tonnage. Further, to make this section more attractive for Indian ship-owners, Government has decided to allow deduction of funds transferred under Section 33AC while computing book profits for the purpose of Minimum Alternate Tax.

(vii) The Government has allowed private sector participation in providing training to seafarers, which would help in producing a higher number of quality seafarers to man Indian flag tonnage.

All the above measures are expected to have positive impact on the growth of Indian tonnage in the coming years. In addition, the Government has also initiated action on the following so as to achieve the target to be fixed for the 10th Plan and also to provide a level playing field for Indian Shipping Industry so as to make it internationally competitive.

- The Government constituted an Expert Committee to review the Indian Shipping and suggest measures to address its problems. The Committee in its report recommended introduction of tonange tax as is followed by the leading maritime nations of the world. Action has already been initiated on the recommendations of the Committee by the Government.

- The Government has initiated a series of measures to improve port infrastructure and efficiency so as to attract higher capacity vessels, improve turnaround time, reduce per unit cost, etc. which would have a positive impact on the Indian Shipping Industry.

Notification regarding medical waste management

578. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any notification regarding medical waste management for disposing waste safely and in an environment-friendly way;

(b) if so, the date of notification in each State;

(c) the total number of hospital that have authorization certificates to dispose waste; and

(d) the total number of hospitals that have incinerators as on March, 2002, district-wise, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) Government of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests has notified the Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998 for safe disposal of Bio-Medical Waste.

(b) to (d) The Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998 were notified on July 27, 1998 and are applicable to all States/Union Territories. As per information avilable with the Central Pollution Control Board, the status of authorization in the States and Union Territories is given in the Statement. (*see* below).